



Identifying and evaluating market demands.
Creating a recognizable product in partnership with the local community

Maarika Toomel Heritage Tours/ LoonaManor/Vilsandi NP Saaremaa island, Estonia 2011













Background

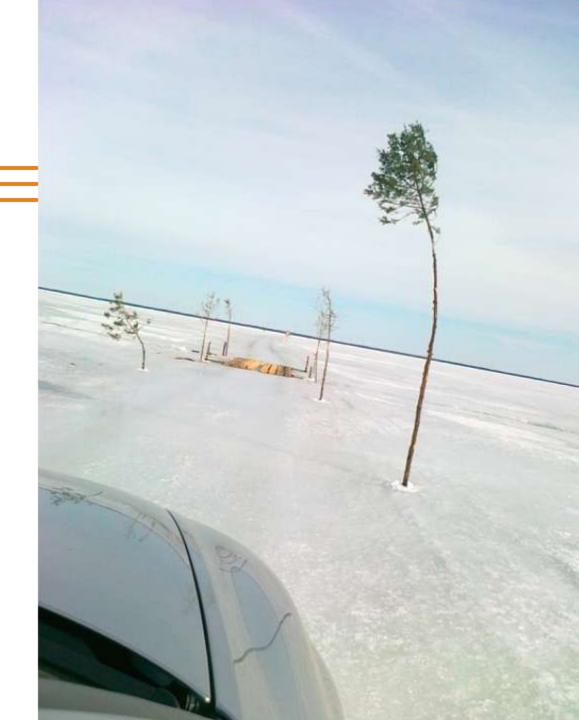
- 1980- in the tourism industry.
- 2005 -teacher of tourism subjects.
- 2006 "Heritage Tours"
- 2009 operator of Loona Manor, centre of Vilsandi NP (1910)
- 2009,2010 nominated for "Tourism Developer of the Year" on Saaremaa
- Tourest 2011 nominated for "Tourism Developer of the Year" in Estonia.

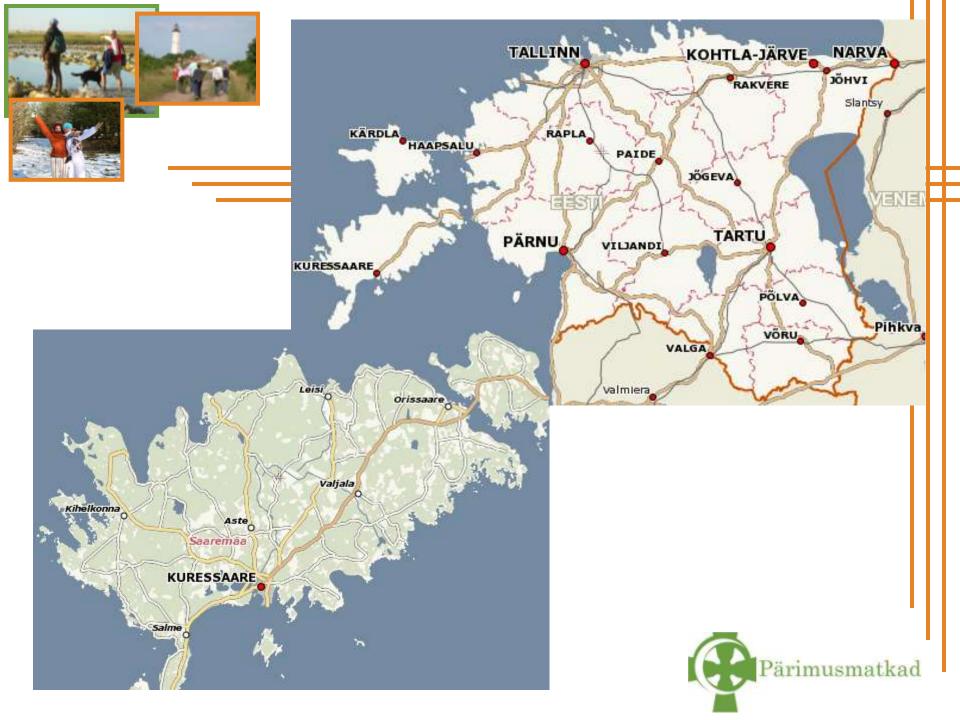






Road Signs on Ice Road ©





Advantages of our Islands as Tourist Destinations

challenging;



Advantages of our Islands as Tourist Destinations

- Compact, all destinations easy to reach, short distances between sights;
- Well developed infrastucture;
- Plenty to see and experience;
- English is widely spoken.



Advantages of our Islands as Tourist Destinations

- NATURAL HERITAGE
- Kaali meteorite crater the best accessible site of its kind in Europe.
- The oldest nature protection area in the Baltics (Vilsandi NP);
- Abundant Birdlife (incl. Stellers eider), wildlife and butterflies;
- Extremely rich flora 34 species of wild orchids, relict and endemic species;
- Open limestone cliffs with Silurian fossils, corals in the Baltic sea.
- Interesting semi-natural coastal landscapes





Kaali Meteorite Crater







Silurian Fossils













Seals, and Wildlife







Vilsandi NP - IBA

Steller's Eider *Polysticta stelleri*

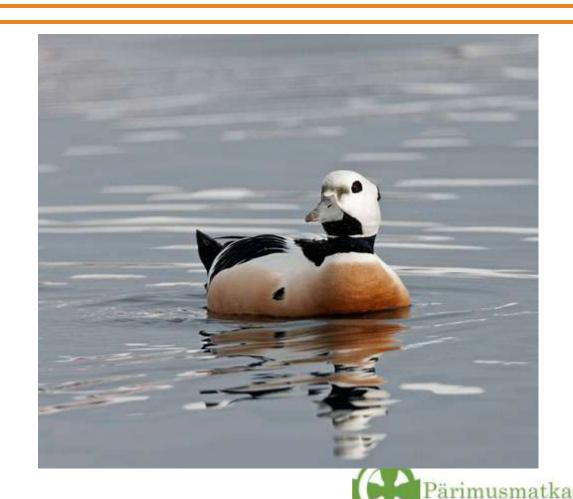


Photo:Jari Peltomäki



Wild Orchids, endemics, relicts













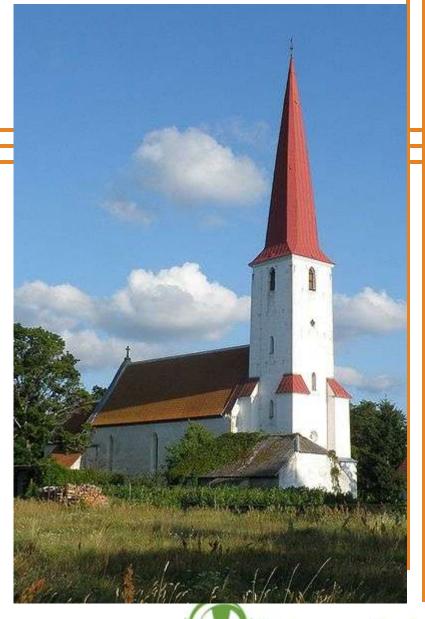
- HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE:
 - Numerous medieval, well preserved churches;
 - Kuressaare Episcopal Castle;
 - Manors, lighthouses, harbour sites;
 - Picturesque and well preserved villages;
 - Windmills, dry-stone walls, ancient bridges;
 - Folk traditions, colourful costumes, charming traditional life-style, language, habits.





- Karja church
- Kihelkonna church

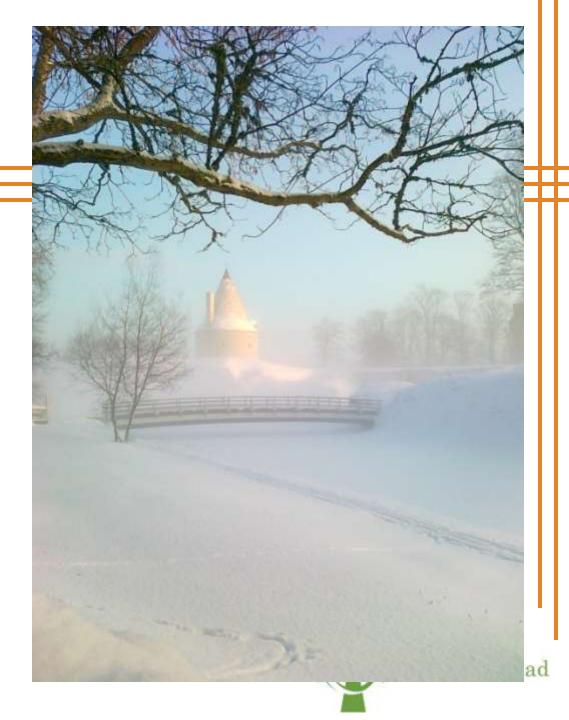








EpiscopalCastle













Requirements for Market Development

- Connections: ferry, flight, bus, ice road
- Accommodation
- Services wide range
- Good infrastructure
- Wide choice of activities





Two major aspects of our business

- Two concepts:
 - similar, but different,
 - United, but independent.





- Heritage Tours- packaging natural and cultural heritage in modern ways to make it attractive for today's demanding and urbanized visitors.
- Loona Manor start nature tourism in Vilsandi National Park and building up the nature tourism visitor center.





Two major aspects of our business

- Main target groups for Loona and HT: DE,RU;
- Side targets: NL, UK, LV,FI,SE





Heritage Tours

- www.heritagetours.ee
- www.parimusmatkad.ee (in Estonian)
- Format for NP
- Demand for heritage groups for Estonia and the Baltics is rising.





Loona Manor

- www.loonamanor.ee
- 1509, the only manorial complex on Saaremaa.
- 1910 Vilsandi National Park
 - Centre of VNP since 1997
- 6 different buildings, different functions:
 - Exhibition House
 - Stone House
 - Stable
 - 2 houses not presently developed
 - Manor house





LoonaManor

- Guesthouse, tenting, loft
- Caffe-restaurant Kadvel, outdoor caffe
- Tourist information
- Daily regular Heritage Tours
- Travel agency, travel services
- Souvenir sales
- Piano hall culture programmes
- Workshops
- Exhibition hall
- Stone house









- Develop area via developing tourism.
- Bringing together local entepreneurs to form one product – the Heritage Tours.
- Facing the Sea slogan.
 - Coastal heritage.





Tourism = Income

- Tourism and services are often considered to be a non-productive activity.
 - See regional possibilities;
 - Understand how tourism "works";
 - Show the values and opportunities in our own region, home.





Educating the Young

- Children should be
 - love the local area,
 but learn from distant
 areas and utilise
 the new knowledge.





Educating the Young

 Schools could be encouraged to prepare students to consider learning skills associated with tourism.





Educating the Young

- Special programmes for schools
- Student summer courses
- Nature Tourism Conference in oct 2011





Become an Entrepreneur

 One possibility to survive is to develop one's own business.

Enterprise Estonia







EDEN contest

2009 - mapping possibilities of the area

2010 - engaging more locals

2011 – mapping Loona Manor – centre of

Vilsandi NP





Problems and Solutions

- Having a boat and fishing knowledge is not enough to provide a quality fishing-tour as a product.
- Knowledge of local (coastal) skills.
- Locals lack the service and sales skills.
- SERVICE MAKES THE PRODUCT





Problems and Solutions

• LACK OF MOTIVATED HELPERS, SEASONAL WORKERS.

- students!!!
- voluteers!!!











Problems and solutions

- UNIFIED PRODUCTS ARE EASY TO SELL
 - Heritage Tours regulars
- INTERNET MARKETING
- No proper website for NP and the area:
 - <u>www.saaremaanaturetourism.ee</u>
 - www.visitestonia.com









Problems and Solutions

SEASONALITY, SHORT SEASON

 Out of season products (bird watchers, hunters, seals, services for spa-hotels, ice road etc)

CENTRAL BOOKING SYSTEM FOR NP

- centre of the NP could provide booking service.
- Tourist Information in the village.
- Voucher system.





Winter activities











What have I learned

- A product by itself cannot succeed.
 - infrastructure support
 - input from local suppliers
- Recognition of our have made us wellknown, people have started to trust our concept.
- Step by step, no hurry, and you will be the winner[©]









Welcome to Saaremaa!





Thank you!



